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A SCOTTISH FEMINIST PUBLICATION



Features :

*Violence Against Women —
Rape & Battered Women in Scotland*

Interview with a Woman Welder

Patchwork Quilts

25p

editorial

This is the first issue of MSPRINT - a Scottish feminist publication. MSPRINT is produced by an editorial collective of women from several areas of Scotland. The magazine has two aims - to stimulate debate in the Women's Liberation Movement and to develop an analysis of the position of women in Scotland and the role of women in Scottish politics. Contributions from women in Scotland are welcome e.g. articles, poetry, fiction, graphics, letters, reviews and interviews. We want to make Feminist Forum a regular feature and have at least one major article on women in Scotland in each issue. We hope that MSPRINT will come out quarterly.

Some of our readers will know that the forerunner of MSPRINT was the Scottish Women's Liberation Journal which came to an end in April after four issues. The views of various members of that collective have been aired in recent issues of the Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Tayside Newsletters. We feel that sufficient publicity has now been given to the details of the split in the collective of the Scottish Women's Liberation Journal. If women wish to continue this discussion we welcome contributions to MSPRINT's Letters Page.

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FEMINIST FORUM

These two pages are to be a regular feature of Msprint. We want articles from YOU about your ideas and views on why you are a feminist. How do you see the struggle for women's liberation, how do you relate to the Women's Liberation Movement? We want articles (1000 - 1200 words) on your views, experiences, etc. When did you first become aware of the ideas of women's liberation? Did it have anything to do with childhood, marriage, motherhood - or none of these?

Since this is the first issue of Msprint and hence the first article on theory in it I would like to outline the importance of theory in the Women's Liberation Movement generally, and then to indicate my own position with regard to the development of theory. Neither of these two aspects will be dealt with exhaustively, but if this article stimulates other women to think by setting out ideas in this way it has been useful.

The Women's Liberation Movement developed directly through women analysing their experience, trying to identify 'the problem' which they felt in their lives. Women stopped internalising 'the problem' as their own inadequacy or inability to cope and began to look at the roles which society dictated for them, their expectancy and images of themselves. They developed a theory of oppression of women as a sex and from this exploded the myths about their own sexuality, their inferiority to men, their 'natural' role as mothers and homemakers. Armed with this understanding of their situation women have realised the essential importance of demanding the right to an independent existence, not as somebody's wife or somebody's mother; the right to control when and if to have children; and rejected the alienation from their own bodies inflicted by the 'sex object' cult.

Seen in this way liberation is not an ideal to which reality will have to adjust. It is the real process which abolishes the present state of affairs, while at the same time being determined by the state of affairs. Revolutionary feminists (by that I mean Radical feminists and Socialist feminists) who do not believe liberation possible in this society are having to work out how to achieve a society where women are not oppressed. So far the campaigns which women have taken up, although flowing from our theory of oppression, have lacked an overall framework - e.g. the National Abortion Campaign, the fight for equal pay, etc. They are all parts of the same struggle but we have no definite plan as a movement of how to fight and win; no strategy as yet. To develop one we need not only to recognise and describe women's oppression but to look at its causes, its functions, and the methods by which it is maintained in order to go about destroying it.

It is on these questions that the differences between Radical feminists and Socialist feminists arise - basically over whether the enemy is men as

a gender or capitalism as a set of social relations. These differences are valid, and productive and should not be allowed to be divisive in the movement. As I said, liberation is a process and both radical and socialist feminists have to contribute to it - it is a dialectic.

The process is taking place in a set of conditions which in this case happens to be the specific form of women's oppression under capitalism. Radical feminists should not ignore this - the liberation of women necessitates the destruction of capitalism. However the destruction of capitalism does not necessitate the liberation of women. Oppression may simply take another form as it did in pre-capitalist societies and socialist feminists have to acknowledge this.

My own position in relation to the women's movement is that of a Marxist feminist. What I mean by that is that I think the dialectical method of reasoning is the most useful and productive way of understanding women's oppression and how to fight it (that method is essentially to grasp wholes as the product of contradictions - e.g. oppression of women is contradiction between the needs of the patriarchy as capitalism and the needs of women as individuals - if there were no contradiction between the two there would be no oppression). On this basis the question of who is the enemy is not a dichotomous one. The objective situation in which women live is a whole, we divide it up into points and concepts in order to be able to assimilate it, but in fact when we act the effect is on the whole. This sounds very abstract but what I'm trying to say is that we cannot fight patriarchy and leave capitalism alone - they are part of the same reality in which we are oppressed.

However the fight against capitalism has centred on a class analysis of society and concentrated on the revolutionary potential of the working class. This analysis does not in any way accommodate the

oppression of women as a gender; but working from a class analysis left wing groups have attempted to encompass the need for the liberation of women, hence the centrality of whether housework is socially productive and the emphasis on women at work - i.e. are women part of the working class. But the primary role of women in capitalist society is that of wife and mother - not 'worker'. The nuclear family defines the female role under capitalism, and capitalism is a set of social relations, thus the nuclear family is not a consequence of capitalism, it is a major foundation of it.

'If we make the mistake of regarding it (the family) only as part of the superstructure, dependent for change only on the stages of struggle in the factories then we will be moving in a limping revolution that will always perpetuate and aggravate a basic contradiction which is functional to capitalist development.' *

This basic contradiction is the sexual division of labour. With present technology much domestic work could be automated but it would need to be socialised to do that - the economies of scale - but capitalism could not ever do so. It hinges upon the nuclear family to implode within the household the contradictions that would otherwise explode elsewhere. Capitalism uses the oppression of women to exploit them - as unpaid labour, as passive and obedient supports to their men, as consumers when they find no other satisfaction in their lives and they try to find it in material possessions.

But to ask women to unite to join in the anti-capitalist struggle because it is going to further the revolution is again to subordinate the needs of women to those of men. Liberation is by definit-

ion about being able to develop fully as individuals - to satisfy their aspirations, to gain love and respect as individuals. For me the important question is whether men are willing to unite to support women in their struggle for liberation.

The exigent problem for us as a movement is to develop new ways of struggle centred in the community, not the workplace. We must reject housework and direct our energies to smashing the role of housewife. Through political struggle of this kind women will confront men as individuals, not as wives or mothers. As we develop these methods, this strategy, we will be fighting capitalism and the patriarchy simultaneously, but the important thing for women is that it offers an alternative identity to the women who before found it only at the level of the domestic ghetto. In the sociality of struggle women discover and exercise a power that effectively gives them a new identity. The new identity is and can only be a new degree of social power.*

It is the role of theory to assist in knowing how and where we can most effectively struggle.

* The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community. Marirosa Dalla Costa and Selma James.

**Marcella
FitzGerald**

On Heterosexuality

I'll tell you for why
I feel like a spy
When I talk to some women these days
Someone always explains
How my energy drains
Through my watered down liberal ways.

To confess I'll begin
Though I know it's a sin
When I sleep with my man
I whisper to him
What went on at the meeting
I keep on repeating
Our very best strategies, tactics and plans
And what we will do when we get our hands
On the power that's traditionally man's.

Though it may sound absurd
He phones what he's heard
To the Central Committee
Who are still sitting pretty
Unaware of the wrath they've incurred

It dawns on them then
That our hatred of men
Is a force that is hard to defeat
But with info from me
They surely will see
A way to restore us, happy and glorious
To fulfilment when cooking the tea.

007

Violence against Women

Over the past few months workshops organised by the Campaign for Legal and Financial Independence, the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties, and the Workers' Educational Association have been held in both Edinburgh and Glasgow on various issues concerning women in Scotland. The areas chosen were amongst those on which a Scottish Assembly will be able to legislate, and the intention of the workshops was to use the proposed Assembly as a focus for demands for change. The articles reproduced below were prepared for the first workshop held in Edinburgh, which was entitled 'Violence against Women'. Both articles describe the current situation in Scotland, and served as starting points for discussion at the meetings. We hope that in the same way they will serve as starting points for discussion in the pages of Msprint.

Battered Women - Fran Wasoff

A Scottish Assembly will shift decisions involving changes in Scots law, some social and health services, planning and many educational functions to Edinburgh, and for the first time, many people in Scotland will feel they have a real voice in determining their own affairs and have the chance to rectify years of oversight in Scottish matters. Whilst a real say in controlling our lives is, of course, to be welcomed, it is certainly not yet clear who will be having a say and who will still effectively be disenfranchised. When we ask who is relatively powerless in Scotland, we must come to grips in a much more serious way with home-grown prejudices and attitudes which have traditionally excluded large sectors of the population from having their needs fully met and having a full voice in political decision-making.

The most easily identifiable majority that can be described in this way is women. Devolution will give us the opportunity to examine how Scottish attitudes, laws and institutions affect women adversely and to suggest solutions appropriate to the Scottish context; or to say it in shorthand, to study and fight sexism in Scotland.

I think it would be a great mistake to limit these discussions to questions like, "how should the law be changed?" or "how would the social or housing services be altered?" or "what legislation should we try to advance?" without placing these very important issues in a wide context of asking what sort of a society we would like to live in.



This is what I would like to do in discussing one part of the theme Violence against Women, which has been long overdue for substantial social and legal change: namely the battering of women.

"Wife battering", by which I mean

the persistent or severe mental or physical assault of a woman by the man with whom she is living, is an age-old corollary of marriage or cohabitation itself. It is common in all cultures we know of and has traditionally accompanied the belief that men need to exact obedience from their women. In Scotland, this belief has a long history and is well summarised by none other than John Knox, who reminds us in his "Blast Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women" that: "God hath subjected womankind to man by the order of his creation and by the curse that He pronounced against her."

Without going into the question of why the battering of women was condoned or at best tolerated until very recently and indeed, why there are still significant sectors of our society who still do, I think we have to look at violence against women as an extreme expression of a heritage that thinks it right that a woman who is married or cohabiting requires control and discipline from her man so that she will behave properly, serve him well and be a proud possession and extension of himself. Some current expressions of this legacy related to wife battering are such commonly



held views as "She must deserve it", "She must provoke him", "You can't interfere between man and wife," "That's my lot in life, I've made my bed, now I must lie in it", and so on.

Our most important job - and the longest term aim - is to work for those changes that will put an end to these beliefs. These changes must, it seems to me, ensure that women are no longer considered legal or social extensions of men, that marriage is a freely chosen option for women from a range of equally attractive alternatives, that women have control over their own bodies and sexuality, and that violence against women is regarded with the same severity as other major crimes.

I don't think one can think of 'solving' the problem of wife battering without tackling these other fundamental issues, and I hope that some of the discussion will focus on how such changes can be brought about.

There are, however, immediate steps that can be taken to alleviate the suffering of the victims of domestic violence and I hope to make some suggestions now. But again, I must emphasise the distinction between working for reforms that will relieve the immediate suffering of some victims and removing the cause of the problem.

The most glaring injustice that confronts us is the weakness of the legal protection available to a battered woman. Scots law has presented particular difficulties on this score, which have made it even less effective than English law before it was recently changed. A charge of criminal assault in Scotland, unlike England or Wales, must be substantiated by

two witnesses, usually the victim plus some other observer. Since wife battering normally takes place behind closed doors with no one present other than the batterer and the victim, it is usually impossible to reach this standard of evidence and this is one reason that police cite for their reluctance to take action. We should be examining ways to alter the law of corroboration in respect of domestic assaults, although any change must still safeguard the rights of the accused. It should be added that even when there is ample evidence of criminal activity, the police can be slow to act; the lament "There's nothing we can do, it's domestic" is the all too common excuse for complacency.

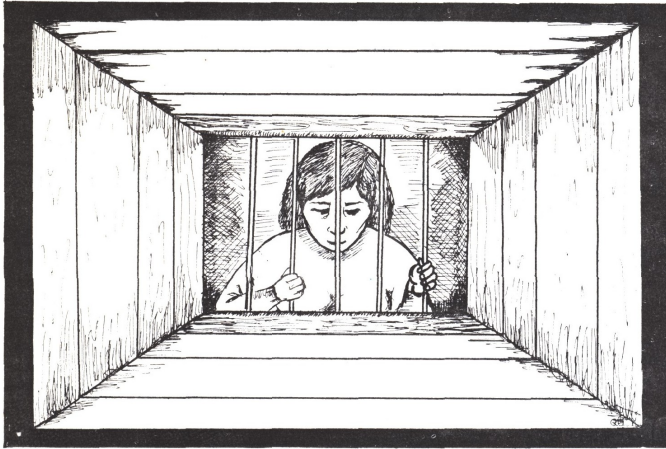
There are two civil remedies available to a battered woman which exhausts her range of legal protection. The most commonly known is the action called interdict which is roughly comparable to the English injunction and which when served on a husband, can order him to refrain from molesting or threatening his wife. Sounds fine so far, but it can involve a lengthy process and, when obtained, it must first be served on the man. This means that it cannot be used as an emergency measure and furthermore, it cannot prevent a husband from living with his wife in their home if he is the owner or tenant. Further problems come when there has been a breach of the interdict, that is, when the man has ignored the order and assaulted his wife anyway. The police cannot enforce a breach of interdict since it is a civil, not a criminal offence. A woman must turn to a solicitor who needs to file an action for breach of interdict in the Sheriff Court. Obviously, this can involve a considerable delay, more so if there is also the question of obtaining legal aid and meanwhile a woman must continue to live in danger with her violent man under the threat of legal action. There is no way that the man can be ordered to leave the shared home if he is the owner or the tenant. One might also add that the penalties for breach of interdict are typically light or may just be a warning. It does little to remove the immediate source of the problem and indeed may exacerbate it. It is little wonder that women are reluctant to take legal action and often drop such an action.

The second legal remedy is the action of Lawburrows. This little-known process involves the man lodging a sum of money as security for future good behaviour with the Sheriff Clerk's office. Future violence results in the loss of the security and the possibility of stiffer penalties. The main drawbacks of this action are first, many solicitors are unaware of it and may not suggest it, second, the man must have sufficient means to produce whatever security is asked and last, this cannot ensure to a woman that her man will be kept away from her.

Let us compare this to the legal protection available to a battered woman living south of the border, with particular reference to the changes brought about by the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act which came into force last summer. A woman, married or cohabiting, can request at the same hearing as her injunction is granted, that it be backed by powers of arrest. If successful, her local police station is then notified and will have powers of arrest if there was a breach of the injunction. The man in question can be detained for up to 24 hours before appearing in front of a magistrate. It was also the intent of the Act, and appears to my untrained legal eye to be the letter of the Act that both married and cohabiting women also have the right to have their violent men excluded from the marital home; irrespective of whether he is the owner or tenant. The recent well-reported Davis-v-Johnson case has brought into question whether cohabiting women indeed have this right; however, a ruling from the Law Lords resolved this in the cohabitee's favour.



Domestic Violence Action Group



This legislation did not extend to Scotland for the usual reasons that existing differences in law made drafting a single piece of legislation for both countries too cumbersome. No Private Member's Bill was brought forward for Scotland and in any case, it would be difficult to justify allocating parliamentary time for a bill that had been essentially passed for 90% of the United Kingdom. This is clearly an area that should receive top priority in a Scottish Assembly if it is constituted soon, or if not, in Parliament itself. I understand that the Scottish Law Commission is about to issue a Consultative Memorandum on changes in Scots Law relating to domestic violence, so that this is an opportune moment to begin detailed discussion.

To offer similar protection to battered women north and south of the Border, I would suggest that several changes are needed.

1. A woman should have the right to occupy the marital home whether she or her husband is the stated tenant or owner. This should apply to those living as husband and wife as well as to those legally married. As things stand now, if a man is the sole owner or tenant of the house, he can put his wife out of the home at will.
2. Interdicts, in cases of domestic assault, should be backed by powers of arrest, where necessary, for both married and cohabiting women.
3. Sheriffs should be given the power

to grant exclusion orders so that a violent man can be excluded from the marital home irrespective of his property interest in the home. This should extend equally to those living as husband and wife as to those actually married.

4. Powers to order the transfer of the tenancy to the parent with custody of the children should be introduced in cases of domestic violence.

I do not want to suggest that this is an exhaustive list, but merely to mention a few reforms which I believe are possible to achieve in the short term. However, if achieved, these changes will only result in a significant improvement in the plight of battered women if they are accompanied by a greater sympathy and understanding of the problems still remaining.

From the first of April 1978 the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act has been in force in Scotland. Whilst leaving a detailed discussion of this legislation for the later meeting in this series on housing, I will say that this represents as important step forward in decreeing that battered women are to be considered legally homeless and that housing authorities will have a duty, in most cases, to provide them with housing.

Let us all work to ensure that this is only a first step in a growing trend in Scotland to remove those forces in our society which contribute to the battering of women and which restrict a woman's ability to choose an acceptable alternative way to live her life.

In March a Domestic Violence Action Group for Scotland was set up for voluntary organisations interested in reforms in this field. Some of the reforms called for were as follows:

A woman should have the right to occupy the marital home whether she or her husband is the stated owner or tenant. This should apply to those living as husband and wife and to those legally married.

Interdicts in cases of domestic violence should be backed by powers of arrest, where necessary. This should apply to both married and cohabiting women.

Sheriffs should be given the power to grant exclusion orders so that a violent man can be excluded from the marital home, irrespective of his property interest in the home. This should extend equally to married and cohabiting couples.

Powers to order the transfer of tenancy to the parent with custody of the children should be introduced in cases of domestic violence.

Shortly after the Action Group was set up the Scottish Law Commission published a memorandum on 'Occupancy Rights in the Matrimonial Home and Domestic Violence'. Since the memorandum makes proposals relevant to the areas which the Action Group wishes to see reformed, it is at present being studied by the group, with a view to further submissions being made to the Law Commission. Anyone interested in participating in the Domestic Violence Action Group should contact Scottish Women's Aid (see contact list for address).

Rape

Is rape a problem worth being

concerned about in Scotland ?

The incidence of rape prosecutions in Scotland in 1976 was 52,5 fewer than the prosecutions for murder. However, before looking more at published statistics, a few general points should be made. First, I by no means want to be seen as endorsing the hysteria of the 'law and order' brigade. There are several rational explanations of increased crime rates - including demographic factors such as a high proportion of young men in the most 'criminal prone' age group in the population at present. However, the 'liberal lefty' must be careful not to fall into the position of denying the crime problem altogether.

This has happened particularly with rape when it has been politically inconvenient to admit it's happening. Susan Brownmiller (1) points out how easily progressives shift from defending blacks undoubtedly framed in rape charges to denying the veracity of any woman's claim to have been raped by a black man. Similarly during the Congo war reports of rape were treated as pure reactionary propaganda.

Rape is a threat to every woman, no matter who or where she is, rape is part and parcel of society's attitude to women.

So, without exaggerating the problem, we must accept that rapes, and indeed other assaults on women, do happen. The legal term 'rape' is reserved to an attack which involves penetration of the vagina by the man's penis. Other assaults, no matter how brutal, will be charged, and thus appear in the statistics, as indecent assault.

A steady increase in the number of persons proceeded against for rape can be traced in the 1970's, from 29 in 1972 to 52 in 1976. As always with such published figures we should be cautious in how to interpret this increase. More active investigation by the police, more frequent reporting, could affect the statistics. Other 'crimes against the person' (the category within which rape falls) do not, however, show such a consistent increase.

No man has the right to rape any woman, no matter who she is or where she is, drunk or sober, experienced or not.

The 52 prosecutions for rape followed on 184 rapes reported to the police. In 111 cases someone was 'apprehended, cited, warned or traced.' Thus only 28.3% of reported rapes end in prosecution. This is not, however, a phenomenon restricted to rape alone, as can be seen from the table. Among 'crimes against the person' rape and associated assaults (including incest) do have the lowest rate of prosecution.

BEEN RAPED?

contact

Edinburgh

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

031 556-9437

Open Mon-Fri 6-10p.m. Sat 2-10p.m.

Rape prosecutions show a fairly low rate of conviction. Out of the 52 in 1976, only 28 convictions resulted. (2 were discharged before trial, 5 charges withdrawn, 11 found not guilty, 6 not proven). This 53.8% rate compares unfavourably with indecent assaults heard in the High Court, where conviction rate was 85.7%. The difference may be due to a greater reluctance to convict on the more serious charge, but also to some of the attitudes about rape and women alleging rape, which I want to go on to discuss.

I think certain indications can be drawn from the above statistics, but I am reluctant to draw definite conclusions without a more thorough study of the figures. (2) What the Edinburgh Rape Crisis Group has found, however, is that we are very ignorant of police and prosecution practice and this ignorance makes it difficult to judge how far rape (and associated crimes) is treated differently from other crimes.

Rape is not something that happens only to certain women. No woman wants or deserves to be raped.

Experience elsewhere suggests that rape is a seriously under-reported crime. There is no reason to suppose that the situation in Scotland is any different. Thus published statistics alone give only a partial view. Rapes may be unreported because the woman feels guilty, or partially responsible, or feels ashamed and 'dirty'. The woman may have heard a bit about police procedure and be reluctant to go through the experience. The rapist may be a neighbour or relative whom the woman is reluctant to name. To a large extent, rape, like wife battering, reflects stereotyped

views of 'correct' male and female behaviour, albeit in an extremely violent form. It has been traditionally accepted that the male should be aggressive and the female passive. This not only makes men more capable of attack than women are of defence, but it also affects our social and sexual relationships. Even now women rarely make the first direct approaches to men and wait to be asked (to dance, to go out, etc.).

Legal Change.

As with battering, legal change on its own will not be sufficient to change attitudes - and many proposed legal reforms will be still-born so long as those involved at all stages of legal decision-making believe the myths of rape to be true. However, campaigning for legal changes in itself gives us an opportunity to challenge preconceived beliefs about rape - so long as we don't see legal change as an end in itself.

ed to be ready for, and to want sex with anyone.

(b) this is intensified if the woman has previously had a relationship with the man accused. In fact rape can take place e.g. if the man feels he has been rejected by the woman.

(c) the fact that the woman is experienced in sexual matters is assumed to undermine her entire credibility as a witness.

Myths About Rape

MYTHS ABOUT RAPE - HERE ARE SOME OF THEM.

It's physically impossible for a woman to be raped if she doesn't want to be.

Women enjoy being 'taken' forcibly. (look at all those scenes from plays, novels, and films.)

Women ask for it if they go to pubs on their own/ wear short skirts/ walk home alone at night / don't close the curtains/ go hitch-hiking.

Only young and pretty girls get raped. (Recently 'The Scotsman' reported a case involving a youngish man and an old age pensioner. He had broken into her flat, assaulted her, stolen from her, and subsequently twice had sex with her. Incidentally he was acquitted of the rape charge - being convicted only of assault and theft - the jury believed the woman had consented. Well maybe she did - frightened he would assault her again.)

Rape is where the woman changes her mind again afterwards.

There's no such thing as rape in our permissive society.

MYTHS ABOUT RAPISTS

On the one hand rapists are seen as men with psychological problems/ who are sexually frustrated/ who have been dominated by their mothers. (In practice the majority are young men with what the experts call 'normal' (!) sexuality)

On the other hand rape is viewed as the natural outcome of male sexual urges which are uncontrollable once aroused.

In sexual matters the woman who took the initiative has always been seen as 'fast', and nice girls always say 'no' first. Brought up like this, men and women come to act out traditional roles - men expect women to say 'no' and mean yes, and feel justified in repeating the question. Women themselves often do play 'hard to get'. To an extent all emerging sexual relationships may be seen by the man as 'conquests'. And how many women speak of 'giving in' to their first sexual relationships?

The conduct of the trial.

The raped woman, who is officially merely a witness, is often put on trial as regards her character. Questions will frequently be asked by the defence about her previous sex life. The implications of this questioning are:

(a) that a woman who is sexually experienced is unlikely really to have been raped. Behind this lurks the belief that only rape of a virgin is properly a rape. A sexually experienced woman is assumed

Thus during the trial there may be a shift of emphasis from proving the events of the alleged rape to examining the credibility of the main witness.

Overcoming her will.

This process is in part linked to the crucial element of proving that the woman did not consent. There is no statutory definition of rape in Scotland, but central to the definition adopted by the courts is the concept of the woman's will 'being overcome'.

Thus, although there can be legal rape where violence is not used against the woman, if there were no visible signs of violence (bruising, cuts, torn clothing) it will be difficult to prove that the woman's will was indeed 'overcome'.

In England, since the Sexual Offences Amendment Act 1976, evidence about a woman's sexual experience will be admitted only at the discretion of the judge. Is this sufficient, or would it be better to exclude such evidence altogether?

The need for corroboration.

Here again there is an overlap with the discussion on battering. Rape, like battering, is rarely witnessed by others. Scots law requires corroboration - not necessarily two witnesses to the actual event but at least someone who can give evidence as to some of the surrounding circumstances e.g. having seen the woman immediately afterwards. Identification of the man causes similar problems - the evidence of the woman alone is not enough. Medical evidence (relating to blood and semen) may be supplementary to the woman's identification. If a man is accused of several similar rapes, the evidence concerning each separate event is held to corroborate the other evidence. (Thus in the recent case in Glasgow where two men were convicted of picking up girls by car on several occasions, the evidence of the women could corroborate each other's story.)

Although the rules on corroboration make conviction more difficult (and therefore prosecution less likely in the first place) we should be cautious before jettisoning these rights of the accused. It would be impossible to restrict such a change to battering and rape (and indecent assaults, etc.) and thus we could be in danger of reducing considerably the rights of accused persons. Take identification for instance - in England in the last few years there has been considerable concern about the unreliability of 'identification' and yet many people have been convicted largely on the strength of such evidence. The Scottish system affords greater protection in this situation.

Husbands raping wives.

Traditionally it has been assumed that a husband, having presumably purchased the exclusive right to his wife's sexual favours, cannot be held to have raped his wife. However this is not laid down in

Act of Parliament, but only developed through case law. This means that a modern court might reach a different decision, but would the procurator fiscal's office be prepared to prosecute? It might be more effective for legislation to change the law quite clearly. But should change be restricted to situations where the couple are living apart?

Police practice.

The woman may find it difficult to get her story believed at the time of her initial complaint. The police of course merely share (often however in an intensified form) the myths and beliefs about rape current in wider society. Although the decision to prosecute is in fact taken by the procurator fiscal's office, the opinions of the police gathered during the initial investigation will be influential.

The police have also been accused of dealing with women unsympathetically, even those whom they are disposed to believe. In part this is due to the perceived need to carry out medical examinations and so on as quickly as possible. This should not however be allowed to lead to ignoring the natural distress of the woman and the need for emotional support, e.g. from a friend, if she wishes this. Further, because police share the belief that women are prone to making untrue allegations, the woman is often cross-questioned in an aggressive fashion at this stage in order to 'test' her.

How can we alter police practice? The police dislike outside interference which could make changes in this field difficult. However changes in law and court procedure may themselves work through to influence the way police operate.

This is a revised version of a speech given at the first of the "Women's Devolution" seminars in Edinburgh on 11th March 1978.

Footnotes.

1. Against Our Will.
2. In particular, conviction rates for other crimes have not been examined.
3. It was intended that the discussion groups should talk about these myths, so they are not here given a detailed treatment.

Sheila Gilmore

More on Rape

The issue of rape is one of growing importance in the Women's Liberation Movement throughout Britain. At the Women's Liberation National Conference in Birmingham in April a seventh demand was adopted - 'We demand freedom for all women from intimidation by the threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status; an end to all laws, assumptions, and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women.' At the Scottish Socialist Feminist conference in Glasgow in May women voted for a week of action on rape some time in the autumn.

In Edinburgh a Rape Crisis Centre opened at the beginning of July. The centre exists for women who have been raped, or sexually assaulted, who want advice or counselling, or who want to talk to someone sympathetic about the experience.

The Centre will be open from 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. Mondays to Fridays, and from 2.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. on Saturdays. The telephone number is 031-556-9437. The Centre can also be contacted in writing through P.O. Box 120, Head Post Office, Edinburgh EH1 3ND.



Joan Ure has been writing plays, poetry and prose for many years but unfortunately has not received much recognition, and it is only recently that her work has been appreciated. She was commissioned to write a full length play for the Perth Theatre but due to her illness she was unable to complete this. It is to be hoped that we will now see more of her plays performed around the country.

Joan showed great enthusiasm for the Scottish Women's Liberation Journal in its early days, and supported it materially by taking collections at performances of her plays. We hope that we can repay this debt posthumously by telling women in Scotland about Joan's work.

Joan has said of her writing, 'Many of my plays have seemed to be about the lack of communication between male and female, in Scotland.' This lack of communication is an experience common to many of us, and one which Joan portrayed with insight and wit. We look forward to seeing her plays published.

JOAN URE

Joan Ure died in March this year. Friends are now trying to get her writing published. Joan knew that as a feminist she had to write about her experiences as a woman living in Scotland. She fully understood that although women's literature from all over the world stimulated her she could not mindlessly regurgitate it. Throughout her life she suffered from the heavy handed dominance of London in so-called cultural circles.

Joan was excited and comforted by younger women sharing her feminist ideas, especially those who were not scared to admit they wanted a 'Scottish perspective' on women. I now want to spit at the memory of so-called sisters' behaviour towards her at the Scottish Women's Conference in Glasgow in 1976. She had agreed to give a reading of one of her plays. Some women with their South of England 'know it all' insensitivity wanted to disrupt the play - it had a male character, not even a male actor in it. Luckily they did not succeed. My mind boggles and my Glaswegian aggro is incensed still, as I remember the incident. The Scottish Women's Movement, in so far as it exists, has too much of such behaviour and I can no longer stomach being associated with it. Maybe the only protest is to stop taking part in any of the movement's activities.

I knew a bit about Joan's work, more about her as a woman. I would never be so arrogantly academic as to attempt a criticism. When the works are published, women can read them for themselves.

Cathie Thomson

Me Jane You Elfie

Who Needs Paisley Adams?

This play was first performed at Dundee Rep as part of a 'Season of plays about Women'. This was the second Joan Ure play to be produced at the Rep, they did 'Something in it for Cordelia' as a late night show a few months ago. 'Me Jane, You Elfie, Who Needs Paisley Adams?' was also produced as a late night show, it was also the only play in the season written by a woman. (The other plays were 'The Gingerbread Lady' by Neil Simon, 'The Taming of the Shrew' by William Shakespeare and 'Mrs Warren's Profession' by George Bernard Shaw.) Unfortunately Joan Ure died a few days before 'Me Jane, You Elfie, Who Needs Paisley Adams?' received its first ever public performance and her funeral coincided with the opening of the play. Presumably because her play was successful as a late show it was repeated in April, this time at 7.30, in the University 'Bonar Hall'.

'Me Jane, You Elfie, Who Needs Paisley Adams?' is about the relationship between two women: Jane, a young playwright and Elfie, a schoolteacher who provides her with food, encouragement and love. But the play is also about Jane's attempts to achieve success in a male dominated field without having to prostitute herself or compromise. Jane uses Elfie for support but in the end leaves her as she gets a chance to have one of her plays put on down south (the play is set in Scotland, presumably Edinburgh.) One feels sorry for Elfie, but what else could Jane have done? Ironically, earlier in the play Elfie tries to persuade Jane to post off her plays instead of hanging around 'the club' trying to get noticed, and in the end this is how she is successful - but it means she has to leave.

Nina Woodcock

Feminist Review

65 Manor Road
London N 16.

A Self-Financing Women's Journal

To develop the theory of Women's Liberation and debate the political perspectives and strategy of the movement.

The Feminist Press is run by a collective of women based in London, but in close touch with women and groups all over the country - please get in touch with us if you would like to be involved.

The first issue will be out in January

DO SCOTTISH WOMEN

an interview with bella keyser by ingrid muir

Bella Keyser works as a welder in a shipyard - the only woman in Scotland to do so. I first met her during the recording of a TV-programme devoted to the question : 'Do Scottish women need liberation ?' Like me, Bella was in no doubt that they do. A couple of weeks later I visited her and spoke to her about her life and work.

Ingrid: How did you become a welder in a shipyard ?

Bella : I was directed there during the war. It was a choice between being a land girl and a welder. I went to Bonar and Long as a welder and then to Smith's and then to Robb Caledon. At first I earned £2.12/6 but after I passed the vertical weld test I got £4 12/10. The men were getting £7 and I knew I was doing as much work as them so I asked for more. The manager offered me 5/- but the union said it had to be £1 or nothing so I got nothing. The men were on piecework but the women couldn't be.

Men'll work in bad conditions if the money's right, but women won't. At Vidor we asked for more ventilation because the fumes weren't getting away. The management said no as they only rented the building and couldn't make any alterations to it. So we got a sledgehammer and knocked a hole in the wall.

Ingrid: What was the men's attitude to you ?

Bella: I was only 17 and most of the men were in their 40's and 50's so they treated me like a daughter. On the other hand, although women had to be in the Boilermaker's Union they weren't allowed to attend yard meetings or vote on strike issues. The men recognised us as temporary and didn't think we understood trade union issues.

Ingrid: Did you stay on in the yard after the war ?

Bella: No. I was paid off at the end of the war. Then I went on the trams until I was paid off again for the return of the men. I went back to welding. A lot of new factories were starting up and I went to Astral Fridges where I did gas welding - I can do three kinds of welding; electric, gas and the new semi-automatic. The foreman at Astral didn't approve of women being in welding and he gave me silly jobs to do like looking up tubes for splits.

Ingrid: You've obviously spent a lot of your time working with men. Have you ever worked with women ?

Bella: At Vidor I worked only with women. I liked the job even though it was one of the sweatiest, dirtiest factories on the industrial estate. I also worked in Timex where I saw mass hysteria break out through sheer boredom. One woman would say she was feeling ill and in no time every woman was saying she felt ill. Routine work allows worries to prey on your mind - you forget how to think. When I worked with women I saw a lot of unhappiness because of men's lack of understanding of women's situation. But there was great comradeship among women - we were all the same. We went out together at night and that helped to bind us together.

NEED LIBERATION?

Ingrid: Did you not try to get back into the shipyards ?

Bella: I used to play this game for a time. I'd write for welder's jobs, signing the letter "B. Keyser". Back would come their letter, "Dear Mr Keyser". At the interview I'd be told that the union insisted they take men. The bosses were willing to take me because I was cheap labour but the union wouldn't allow women in the yard undercutting men's wages. That changed when the Equal Pay Act came in.

Ingrid: I'm glad to hear it made some difference.

Bella: Well, not always. In 1973 I was offered a job at Torbrex because I was a good welder. I got £19 wages but the man who worked with me got £29. After a rise I got £23 but the man got £33. They paid him off - he won a case for unfair dismissal - and took on another man at £23. When I went to ask for equal pay I was told I had it. So I walked out.

Ingrid: We hear a lot about women's lack of militancy - that's why they end up with boring low paid jobs. Did you find this ?

Bella: No. The women were very militant - they are in heavy industrial areas. Men'll work in bad conditions if the money's right but women won't. At Vidor we asked for more ventilation because the fumes weren't getting away. The management said no as they only rented the building and couldn't make any alterations to it. So we got a sledgehammer and knocked a hole in the wall.

Ingrid: What happened ?

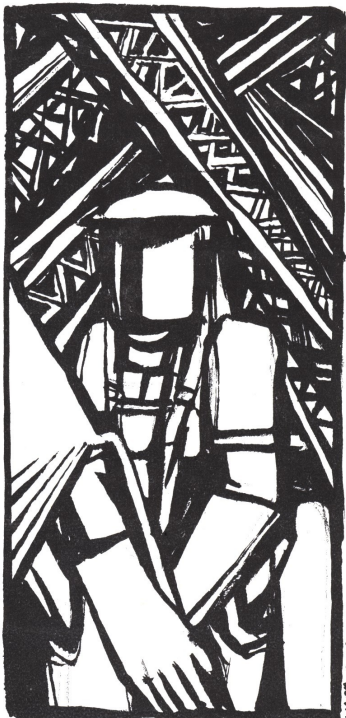
Bella: They made a fuss but we were all in it together.

Ingrid: How did you get back into shipbuilding ?

Bella: After I had a hysterectomy I stayed at home for a couple of years but I got fed up so I applied for a part-time job in the kitchen at Maryfield Hospital. I didn't get it because I was too old and had had a hysterectomy. After I left Torbrex I went to night school for a refresher course in welding then applied for membership of the Boilermakers' Union. I went down to Robb Caledon for an interview. I passed the welding test so they had to give me the job as it had been vacant for two years.

Ingrid: Has the men's attitude to women in the yards changed any in the last thirty years ?

Bella: Thirty years ago the younger men weren't too keen on women working. Now most men are much more amenable to women going out to work. Men aren't so ashamed of saying they help in the house and things like that. Thirty years ago it was men who had all the comradeship, the solidarity, - now it's the women. Men are developing a cattiness.



MARK GARDNER

The foreman at Astral didn't approve of women being in welding and he gave me silly jobs to do - like looking up tubes for splits.

Women who are determined and banded together with a common ideal can move mountains.

Ingrid: Your whole life has been a struggle for equality. Most women wouldn't even have attempted to do what you've done. What made you so determined?

Bella: My father had a big influence on me. He thought that girls deserved the same education as boys. I remember him arguing for women inspectors on the trams. It's because of him that I've always been in a trade union. He was a baker and fought for improvements in conditions.

Ingrid: Do you think the fact that you belong to Dundee, an area of high female employment and equally high male unemployment, had any influence on you?

Bella: Quite probably. Dundee men were known as 'kettle boilers' because they couldn't get jobs and stayed home and looked after the house while the women worked at the jute. The women jute workers in Dundee were the first to come out during the General Strike. I worked at the jute before the war but I left after I saw a film starring Burt Lancaster. He was in prison and his punishment was jute weaving. I wasn't going to do a job like that!

Ingrid: Did you find that being married and having a child made things more difficult for you?

Bella: Not really. My husband never objected to me working. I got married in 1940. I had a son in 1941 and I was back at work in six weeks. My mother looked after the baby. But I know it can be difficult for other women. For example, women with children don't have the freedom to be really active in trade unions. But they can't stop you thinking.

Ingrid: What do you think about the Women's Liberation Movement?

Bella: It's a necessity. Women need to be organised - they've taken a long time to waken up. But how do you organise housewives? I believe in the family as a unit, though. You need a marriage for children. I came of a close family and my father understood my mother's struggles. But maybe the whole structure of it needs changing. Women have a right to choose whether to have children or not. Society imposes a very strong pressure on couples to have children, arguing that a marriage is incomplete without them, but children are not essential to a marriage. Men will have to learn to be more independent as well. They've lost their dirty linen washers.

Ingrid: What other changes would you like to see?

Bella: I'd like to see community centres and nurseries where women could take children even if they chose not to work. Nurseries are very important. I hate those ads. on T.V. putting all the responsibility for children on to mothers, making them feel guilty. I'd also like to see more women getting off work for further education and trade union studies. But I'd really like to see women being aware of and using the power they have. Women who are determined and banded together with a common ideal can move mountains.

QQQ

LETTERS

QQQ

The collective of Msprint would like to encourage women to contribute to the Letters Page. We welcome letters either in response to articles in Msprint, or commenting on events, discussions, experiences, and (in general) on anything you think might be of interest to our readers. We would be pleased to allow our pages to be used to contact individuals and groups throughout Scotland.

In this issue we are printing two letters which continue debates started in the last issue of Scottish Women's Liberation Journal, as we think the arguments put forward are still topical. The two articles referred to are obtainable in

Dear Sisters,

issue number 4 of SWLJ.

Maggie Havergal's article in the last issue of the journal (see Scottish Women's Liberation Journal no. 4) raises some very important questions. It is vital that the movement in Scotland gets the answers right. I am writing to reply to some of Maggie's points and I hope to make a useful contribution to this continuing debate.

The influence of the ideas of the Women's Liberation Movement in Scotland is undoubtedly weaker than in England where 'women's lib' is a household word. Maggie's account of the problems of the movement in Scotland does not provide us with the answers we require to remedy this situation. Maggie suggests that 'there is a need for consciousness raising meetings for Scottish women only'. She concludes that we should organise to pressurise the political parties in Scotland. The expression of reservations about the extent to which an Assembly can solve our problems is classified by Maggie 'as a threat to potential SNP voters'. I wish to explain why I think Maggie's ideas are both divisive and dangerous for the movement.

Why is the movement in Scotland less influential than in England? It is nothing to do with the fact that there is 'only a trickle of Scottish feminist writings'. The majority of women active in the movement in England, who are mainly of middle class origins - white collar workers and students - did not come to the movement through reading Germaine Greer, Simone de Beauvoir, or anyone else.

Higher education gave a whole generation of women certain aspirations to equality, which British capitalism, due to its crisis, was unable to fulfil. The growth of a feminist movement in the United States, the development of campaigns among working class women for equal pay, as well as anti-imperialist movements, all contributed to the birth of the Women's Liberation Movement. The debates and campaigns of this movement concentrated in the early days on abortion and contraception, Miss World contests, housework, nurses' ties and childcare, rather than organising in the trades union movement. This 'middle

layer' does not exist to the same extent in Scotland. Economic life in the highlands bases itself on forestry, agriculture, and, comparatively recently, the oil related industries. The West of Scotland is highly industrialised, with a highly concentrated proletarian population.

Consequently the issues thrown up are those of unemployment, low wages, and chronic social deprivation. Women in Scotland experience the effects of the crisis primarily through these types of issues and it is to these problems that they are looking for answers. There has been no shortage of struggles involving working women in the west of Scotland - Laird Portch is the most recent example. These struggles by themselves do not build the women's movement in Scotland. However, by turning towards such campaigns the women's movement can build itself as well as helping women to win their disputes by publicising them and getting support.

In her article Maggie does not warn us of the dangers of seeing a Scottish Assembly as the answer to all our prayers. Yes, an Assembly is to be welcomed as an extension of the democratic rights of the Scottish people. It is the failure of the Labour Government to deliver the goods that has fed the nationalist movement and in particular it has aided the growth of the Scottish Nationalist Party.

Can the Scottish Nationalist Party deliver the goods? The promises of the SNP are based on oil. At present the oil industry is owned by multi-national companies such as Shell, Esso, Mobil, Occidental. There is very little British investment involved, let alone Scottish investment. The SNP has no intention of seizing control from the multi-nationals, so how is the famous slogan 'It's Scotland's oil' to be implemented. Presumably this process is supposed to take place when 'management' moves from Westminster to Edinburgh. If the aims of our movement are to be fulfilled then fundamental changes will have to take place in society. The SNP does not recognise the necessity for

such a social transformation: 'There is no deep-seated reason why social justice should not be available to all; there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the socio-economic structure of our society.' (R. Burnett. 'Socialists and the SNP.')

We can conclude that they have no objections to unemployment and cuts in the social services since they are nowhere to be seen in the campaigns on these issues. Even closer to home - the issue of abortion - seven SNP M.P.s supported James White's Bill. This is the record of the SNP on all major issues affecting women in Scotland.

The Assembly will have certain powers on health and social welfare and on issues such as abortion. In this sense it is a matter of urgency that we begin to look outward, to build a strong women's movement based on demands which can answer the problems of women. Let's not base any of our hopes on the benevolence of the political parties.

Major policies on pay, conditions at work, and unemployment will continue to be determined by the government at Westminster and by those who wield power because they own the means of production. They will remain united. So please let's reject Maggie's suggestion of separate meetings for Scottish women. Surely we are weak enough as it is. In any case I think we can learn a great deal from our English sisters and perhaps avoid some of their mistakes.

In sisterhood,

Joanna Haynes,
Glasgow.

Dear sisters,

I have now read Esther Breitenbach's report on the Women in Media Education Seminar (see Scottish Women's Liberation Journal no. 4) at least four times. I have one consistent reaction which is one of disappointment. If Esther felt so strongly about the seminar, why didn't she challenge the speakers' assumptions at the time? Why reserve her judgements for consumption by an audience which is going to agree with them - i.e. the readers of the SWL Journal? Is this the way to challenge and change?

Rightly or wrongly, Women in Media has decided that its contribution to the women's movement is to use those methods of communication which are most easily

understood by the people who have the power to produce change. As employees within various types of media, we are well aware that radical elitism is guaranteed to alienate those whose decisions could affect most people's attitudes and lives.

We are also aware that for as long as women within the movement confine their revolutionary zeal to the pages of our own journals, other women will never get to hear what they are saying.

By holding the education seminar, Women in Media was attempting to reach the consciousness of those with some power to make changes within the Scottish education system. Educationalists are forever being attacked for their ineptitude in dealing with society's worst features. The attacks are often justified but the methods merely result in paranoid aggression and an even more reactionary defensiveness - they rarely result in positive amendments. Our hope was that if we could bring together a group of educationalists and face them with some hard facts about the inequalities which exist within the system they help to operate, then they might at least consider the problem, and at best, go away resolved to do something about it. Our second aim was to make the media listen, and the third was to provide a context for individual voices to be heard collectively.

Our success in achieving the first aim is hard to measure, but the second aim was moderately successful and the third much more so. There is now an education working party, affiliated to the Scottish Convention of Women, which has already taken action on four of the 'resolutions' passed at the seminar and is an ongoing pressure group.

Having viewed the seminar in a positive light, I should now return to the more negative view, as expressed by Esther Breitenbach in her review. There is, of course, a great deal of truth in her observations. Much of what was said by the 'experts' was predictable, was complacent and did fail to scratch even the surface of some fundamental prejudices. The CBI spokesperson was quite justifiably a particular victim of Esther's attack. It is unfortunate, however, that she failed to mention Kay Carmichael's response to Alan Stewart's (CBI spokesperson) remarks. This was a superb example of the kind of response we had hoped might be drawn from the audience. Ms. Carmichael challenged the CBI to look again at its fundamental assumptions that

industry requires the status quo in order to maintain present economic structures.

The seminar was indeed a prolonged and sometimes tedious review of opinions which, to those such as Esther Breitenbach who have heard it all before, was a pretty predictable affair. But it started a ripple however incomplete, in the frighteningly stagnant educational pond. We can only hope the seminar raised a few consciousnesses and may eventually erode a few prejudices.

Rose Pipes
Women in Media

REVIEWS

single and pregnant

Single and Pregnant -
by Sally MacIntyre Croom Helm 1977
£6.95 (!) reviewed by Fiona Forsyth

I must admit that I was initially interested in Sally MacIntyre's book 'Single and Pregnant' because I wanted to know more about the abortion situation in Aberdeen. (I assume that her study is about Aberdeen as the description of medical services fits Aberdeen better than any other Scottish city, and, of course, Ms. MacIntyre is based there as a researcher.) However, on reading this fascinating book, I became interested in many other issues, which are the issues faced by single women who find themselves pregnant. As Ms. MacIntyre says:
"While the legal powers of G.P.s and gynaecologists to decide on abortion are commonly recognised, it should be noted that the offers or withholding of moral support by a whole range of persons may be just as important in helping to determine the outcomes of pregnancy."

'Single and Pregnant' follows what happens to 36 women who discover that they are pregnant, and shows how they decide to become unmarried mothers, to get married, have their babies adopted, or have abortions. In some cases 'decision' is the wrong word, as the woman may have little or no choice, or because she feels that there is only one 'natural' outcome to her problem and so she never considers any alternatives. Ms. MacIntyre describes the way other people influence a woman's decisions, e.g. the father of her child, her parents, her friends, her G.P., the gynaecologist she is referred to when seeking a termination, nurses in the maternity ward after the birth, or fellow residents of the mother and baby home.

Doctors and social workers frequently invoke moral judgements about the woman's marital status whatever the women intend to do about their pregnancies. Women attending the ante-natal clinic are repeatedly asked by nurses, health visitors if they are going to get married, and if not, if they are going to keep their child.

"The staff nurse first - she asked lots of questions - and then, was I going to get married? I think that's where it all started - I think the word got around! After she spoke to me, you know. They try not to look shocked, and as many times as they hear it, I think they're still shocked. She asked me what I was going to do. As if it was a major crisis or something - what was I going to do? 'Are you going to have it?' and I says yes and she went all shocked you know, I says I'm keeping it. And she says, 'Are you not having it adopted?' I says no. The health visitor - she sort of asked me - she saw I wasn't married an' she looked at me an' she says, 'What are you doing?' and I says, 'I'm living with my boyfriend.' 'Is he waiting for a divorce?' Maybe they're all like that, I don't know - I says no, and she was most amazed, she says, 'Why aren't you getting married?' And she went on and on like this. And the woman whoever she was, that booked my bed, you know, she asked me the same questions and they ask me every time if I'm getting married. Sally MacIntyre: Was this the doctors as well?"

Yes, the doctor says every time - I wouldn't care, but it was the same one. But the last one I got, he was very nice, went to great lengths to make me feel better but I ended up feeling worse, you know. He's yacking on, 'don't be depressed, dear, don't wish your life away,' and all the rest of it." p. 153.

But a single woman who miscarries is obviously expected by one nurse to show symptoms of relief rather than distress - "She had a little bleeding and had to go down to theatre to have it cleared up and she cried all day; she'd been very upset and had broken down completely. It's just as well that she lost the baby, because she's clearly not fit to have one." p. 155

It's apparent that doctors and social workers assume that pregnancy will be a problem and in fact a crisis for single women (just as they assume that married women will welcome pregnancy). This book illustrates over and over again the illogical pattern of doctors' and social work-

ers' treatment of pregnant single women - the only way in which their policies can be seen to be consistent is if their aim is to uphold the sanctity and importance of marriage and to discourage unmarried motherhood.

Because the case study is about a city with a liberal abortion policy, very few of the women are completely turned down for abortions. But the book illustrates all the more subtle difficulties which women face at the hands of doctors and gynaecologists. It's fascinating (and horrifying) to be able to read the inside information about the factors the doctors consider when deciding whether or not to recommend termination. To begin with, many of the women were at a disadvantage as they did not realise that abortion could legally be performed and so they did not ask to be referred. Of course this ignorance put the doctors in a position of power over the women. Only 2 out of the 21 G.P.s routinely put all four possibilities to all women. Even if a woman was going to get married these doctors would present her with information about single parenthood, adoption and abortion, and discuss with her the implications of the intended marriage.

"Thus, depending on which doctor a woman saw, she might be presented with a list of all the options, whatever she had said she wanted to do; be asked about marriage and if she intended to marry have no further options mentioned, and if she were not intending marriage have the onus placed on her to raise the question of alternatives." p. 75.

Only the two doctors mentioned above thoroughly explained the procedure for obtaining an abortion and other doctors were far more misleading, giving the impression that all power lay with the gynaecologist. This is not true, as the gynaecologist will be influenced by the G.P.'s letter which may or may not recommend termination. For example, one doctor warned his patient that she might be turned down by the gynaecologist but he did not tell her that he was not supporting her application. In

fact his letter to the gynaecologist said:

"I cannot honestly recommend termination in this case. Her first pregnancy was normal and the child was adopted. She knew the risks she was running although she tried to avoid them. There is apparently no question of marriage but more so in this pregnancy than in the last pregnancy she should proceed to full term and have her baby adopted."

G.P.s were able to refer patients to gynaecologists who were most likely to concur with their own views. In this case the consultant the woman should have seen was not available, and she saw a more liberal doctor who told her for the first time that her own doctor had not recommended abortion; he helped her to obtain an abortion despite this. Another woman in the book is not so fortunate, and is turned down by a gynaecologist who agrees with her G.P.. This sort of referral is perhaps less helpful to a woman than a downright refusal. For if a doctor refuses to refer a woman, she may discover he is interpreting the law more strictly than other doctors and she might attempt to change doctors in order to obtain an abortion, if she realises that she is allowed to do so. But in cases like the two described above, women will probably consider they have failed some sort of objective test, and that they are ineligible for abortion.

Few of the women perhaps realised the importance of their doctors' views of their 'moral character'. Most doctors asked the woman a series of questions about her behaviour such as what was her relationship to the child's father at conception, and at the time of the consultation. What contraception had she used, what were her career prospects and what did her parents think of her pregnancy? According to their answers to questions like this the women were more or less categorised into one of three 'types' - a sexually promiscuous and bad girl, a nice girl who had made a mistake, or a normal-as-if-married woman who had conceived earlier than planned.

Doctors were most sympathetic to women they saw as approximating to the second type when it came to abortion referrals. Women were likely to be categorised like this if there was no evidence that they had been promiscuous in the past, if they wore a demeanour of shame or regret in the consultation, if they had tried to use contraception and if the doctor believed their account when they said that intercourse had only taken place once drunk or under pressure. Getting the G.P. to believe their accounts was a problem for several women who became labelled in the category of 'bad, promiscuous girls'. Stories of having been drunk, or of the father about to leave the country were disbelieved because the doctors were sceptical when they fitted too closely to lay ideas about

'what is appropriate to tell a G.P.' Yet similar stories were believed in other cases where doctors had known their patients for a long time. Women in the third category were treated differently: "Those who were going to marry were thus seen as normal, and therefore respectable young women. Because it is also normal for young married women in our society to want, and to have, babies the corollary of being seen as normal-as-if-married women was that they were expected to have, and to keep, their babies."

'Single and Pregnant' paints a fascinating picture of the patient-doctor relationship and all the subtle ways in which a particularly vulnerable group of female patients are oppressed in this relationship. The conclusions of the book are not so outspoken as they might be against doctors and social workers, no doubt because Ms. MacIntyre wants to keep open the possibility of more research into medical decision-making, and by toning down her conclusions, hopes to avoid incurring the wrath of the local medical profession. However the straightforward way in which the women's stories are told, with frequent quotes from the women themselves, and the clear way in which different factors are analysed makes this a strong case for a woman's right to choose not just so far as abortion is concerned, but in all aspects of medical decision-making.

a new world for women

stella browne - socialist feminist

'A New World for Women : Stella Browne - socialist feminist' by Sheila Rowbotham. Pluto Press 1977. Reviewed by Sally Henry.

'Abortion must be the key to a new world for women, not a bulwark for things as they are, economically, nor biologically. Abortion should not be either a prerequisite of the legal wife only, or merely a last remedy against illegitimacy. It should be available for any woman, without insolent inquisitions, nor ruinous financial charges, nor tangles of red tape. For our bodies are our own.'

Sheila Rowbotham says she first became interested in Stella Browne when she was writing for 'Hidden from History'. This book is one of the many pieces of further research we shall

need to satisfy the hopes raised by that catalogue of individuals, groups campaigns and events reclaimed from our hidden history. In 'A New World for Women : Stella Browne - Socialist Feminist' Sheila Rowbotham has researched more fully an earlier campaigner and theorist, a socialist and a feminist, and into the campaigns and political issues in which she was involved : the struggle for socialism, for the liberation of women and for safe, legal abortion on demand.

It seemed to me that the book covers the first area only partially, for I am left wanting to know much more about Stella Browne herself. She was born in 1882 in Canada, educated on the continent and at Somerville College, Oxford. She worked as a librarian, she campaigned for the reform of laws regarding divorce, abortion and contraception, she was a founder mem-

ber first of the Communist Party then of the Labour Party, a founder member of the Abortion Law Reform Association and she died in 1955. She wrote and spoke a great deal about a woman's right to define her own sexuality, and said in public in the 1930's that she herself had had an abortion. But all this gives one little idea of what kind of life she had, what it was like being an activist at that time, how isolated she was and how she survived.

Most helpful in giving some picture of Stella Browne is the reprinting in the appendices to the book of two papers by her : The Sexual Variety and Variability among Women and their Bearing upon Social Reconstruction, and The Right to Abortion. Both papers are dated by a certain romanticism (dwelling on the concept of 'the great love' whatever that may be)

and by considerable woolliness on the question of lesbianism, (ironic this as she ends both papers with a quotation from Anna Wickham - 'The world whips frank gay love with

But frankly, gaily, shall ye get the rods gods')

Otherwise the papers are remarkable for their closeness in political argument and emphasis to present day women's liberation writing on abortion and sexuality.

The greater part of the book describes the origins of the movements for abortion law reform, the connexions between those movements and the weaknesses of the campaigns. The three main strands seem to have been the sexual radicals, the socialists and the eugenicists. There were a number of sexual radicals, Havelock Ellis among them, for whom sexual freedom and a separation of sexual pleasure from procreation were not inextricably linked with radical social changes.

For the socialists there was a strong tradition of interest in birth control although there was a tendency to regard such matters as diversionary and a well-founded suspicion of the ability of the ruling class to use it as a form of (working class) population control, and also to avoid other social changes which would improve the living conditions of working people.

The eugenics movement was the real danger, for they saw abortion and contraception as making possible selective breeding and population control and thus themselves bringing about the 'better society'. "The political implications of eugenics in terms of race and class power which emerged with the growth of fascism in the 1930's were still not clear" Sheila Rowbotham points out, and of course this philosophy had nothing to do with a woman's right to decide whether or not to bear children, simply

regarding women as fit or unfit to breed.

Stella Browne had strong links with the sexual radicals (see the Sexual Variety and Variability among Women) and she used some of the eugenicist arguments, although she of course thought that socialists and feminists were the most fit to breed the new race! But she was one of a small group of people who were able to perceive the connexions between women's liberation and socialism and that ignoring the demand of women to be able to choose whether and when to have children made empty words of communist commitments to social and sexual equality.

The book is an inspiring one because it reveals another part of our history in which our present campaign to call our bodies our own are rooted. But it carries with it warnings of the ways in which that struggle will be constantly blocked and opposed.

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Women's Voice
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CONFERENCE REPORTS

National Abortion Campaign

The recent NAC conference in Sheffield, although smaller than we had hoped, was a good morale booster for Glasgow NAC members who attended. Hearing about the vigorous campaigns being pursued at local level all over Britain was very encouraging indeed. Glasgow NAC had just completed weeks of hard work countering the well-financed anti-abortion activities around the Garscadden by-election, so the national conference was perfectly timed to renew faith in the breadth and depth of support for NAC.

While we had no worries about NAC's growing effectiveness as a campaign, some sisters in our group felt anxiety about conference discussion and decisions on the question of positive legislation. In particular, we were disappointed at the vote that NAC should not at this time support the Abortion Law Reform Association's effort to get their model bill through Parliament but should draft its own bill specifying no time limit on abortion on demand. Our fear, which we hope will prove unfounded, is that the effect of this decision may be to close the door on further (and, we think necessary) debate on the question of foetal viability. Does accepting the principle of a woman's right to choose inevitably entail accepting her right to abortion up to term? What are the political implications of NAC's taking such a position while working to build broad support for a feminist campaign for abortion rights?

From the discussions in our conference workshops on positive legislation it was obvious that at least a large minority had doubts on these questions. While some sisters were certain that foetal viability should not limit a woman's right to choose, others (like us) were uncertain whether terminating a viable foetus late in pregnancy could even be properly termed an abortion. Our dilemma was not helped by the tendency of those against any time limits to incant the right to choose principle as if that were the start and finish of the argument. Simply to state that a woman herself must choose and that any time limit would turn her rights over to a repressive and patriarchal State was, we felt,

naïve. We think that the conference left unexamined genuine difficulties - ethical and political - surrounding foetal viability and that NAC must regard these seriously if it is to continue to wage a campaign which gains support.

In Glasgow we discussed some of these questions prior to the conference, an opportunity which many from elsewhere seem not to have had. Even so, our group's views were at variance. To detail with any clarity the tactical and ethical arguments involved is not possible here. Trying to summarise them for this report, we continually found ourselves lost in the many levels and complexities of the debate. We hope nevertheless that these questions will be taken up more widely within the women's movement and that discussion will not end prematurely as a result of our conference decisions.

Most at the conference felt that positive legislation should not, in any case, be a primary focus for NAC now. This was shown by voting on other resolutions. The main concern of those present was in campaigning around local facilities and issues in order to reach larger numbers of supporters. It is in these apparently reformist activities that our strength lies and through them that our revolutionary potential can emerge. Our decision to adopt a NAC Declaration as a basis for such campaigning reflected this politically realistic view of our role, yet the vexing issue of positive legislation could not be avoided. It was here that tension between principle and strategy became apparent.

ALRA's proposed bill for abortion on demand up to 24 weeks of pregnancy had been narrowly rejected by the previous year's NAC conference and it was then decided that NAC should draft its own bill legislating for abortion as a woman's right without legal or medical restriction. The redrafted ALRA bill put to the recent conference (now with a 28 week time limit after which the right to choose reverts to the doctor) was seen by some sisters as restrictive, even though it would virtually realise abortion rights for women. While the conference voted to campaign vigorously for such a bill once introduced into Parliament, the majority felt that the principle of a woman's right to choose would be compromised were we to support it now and that we must instead draft our own bill. This decision is, in

effect, an act of pure principle which brushes aside any hesitations about tactical considerations. Recognising that NAC's own bill would not see light of day this side of the millenium, the conference voted, to assert principle without, we feel sufficient heed to the complications which arise immediately the question is explored more fully. In terms of internal stresses we wonder whether it was worth the risk of taking this position.

Having voiced these concerns, we should make clear that we fully intend to remain NAC supporters. We are convinced that only concerted campaigning of the sort in which NAC groups are presently engaged can build the public consciousness which must exist in order to bring about real and fundamental changes, gradual or sweeping, in the abortion sphere. The overall voting at the conference showed a hearty endorsement of this basic approach. We hope that more women will take an active part in NAC and share responsibility of determining perspectives on this vital struggle.

JEAN BARR AND KATHLEEN ENGLEMAN.

National Women's Liberation

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBERATION CONFERENCE:
BIRMINGHAM 1978

About 3000 women attended the national conference this year. It was the first national conference at which a new structure was tried: instead of all the workshop time at the conference being given over entirely to specialist topics half the time was spent in randomly allocated groups where we were all supposed to be discussing the same thing. The subjects were: 1) How do we oppress each other in the women's liberation movement? 2) Rethinking the nature of campaigns, their effectiveness and alternatives. 3) How do we come together in terms of our internal organisation?

In the group I was in we went round the circle and said how we felt other women "oppresses" us. We isolated three areas which we wanted to talk about which were: 1) motherhood and childcare, 2) sexuality, 3) socialism.

Sunday started off with more specialist workshops. I decided to go to the one on 'guilt and jealousy' but it was closed as I got to the door, so I went to the one on bisexuality. There was no one else there, but eventually other women trickled in and it turned out to be the best workshop I went to that weekend.

The rest of Sunday was taken up with the plenary. I was sitting at the back which was a mistake as I couldn't see or hear properly. As I also had a hangover I'm afraid I can't write a full report of what went on, I gave up trying to follow it after a while and went for a wander round the bookstalls instead. However the decisions taken were:-

1) The addition of a seventh demand to the six demands of the women's movement. This was 'Freedom for

all women from intimidation by the threat or use of violence or sexual coercion, regardless of marital status. An end to all laws, assumptions and institutions that perpetuate male dominance and men's aggression towards women.'

2) The sixth demand was split and now reads 'An end to all discrimination against lesbians.' The other part of this demand 'a woman's right to define her own sexuality' has been removed from the demands, but the seven demands are now preceded by 'We assert a woman's right to define her own sexuality.'

Usually at the plenary arrangements are made for the next conference but no-one volunteered to do the next one.

So was it worth it? A lot of women didn't like the conference at all, but I enjoyed it (apart

from the plenary). Maybe I liked it because it was the third time I had been to a national conference and you learn how to survive at them. I liked it because I met lots of friends who live in other places. I liked it because there was the chance to see feminist bands and theatre groups which don't often get up to Scotland and there's the chance to buy books which are not available in Dundee. But is this what national conferences are for? Should we have demands and what should they be? How can we work effectively together without some having more power than others? These are the sort of questions which arose around the Birmingham conference and which the women's movement somehow needs to resolve.

Nina Woodcock

COMMENT

DIVORCE ONE STEP FORWARD TWO STEPS BACK

As from 25th April this year a new procedure has been introduced for the hearing of divorces (and actions of separation and aliment heard in the Court of Session). If the divorce is undefended the whole process will now be done by documents i.e. there will no longer be any need for the person bringing the action to make a personal appearance, with witnesses. But it will still be necessary to employ lawyers, including an advocate who will be employed purely to check over the papers to see if everything is in order. This is quite blatantly designed to keep the advocates involved and to ensure they do not lose out in the new procedure. Savings to the 'consumer' (or in many cases to the legal aid fund i.e. the taxpayer) will take the form only of the expenses previously incur-

red in getting, with witnesses, to court. Those living outside Edinburgh will be helped most.

So in a way this reform can be seen as taking some of the heat out of the criticisms of the system, since one of the major criticisms has been the ludicrous arrangement whereby everyone had to make the journey to Edinburgh. Basically, however, the system remains unchanged, so the points made in the article in the last Journal (Scottish Women's Liberation Journal no. 4) remain valid.

Note too that if a divorce is defended on any point e.g. maintenance or custody, appearance in court will still be necessary.

SHEILA GILMORE

WELL DONE

THERESA BENNETT

Amidst the hysteria of the world cup Theresa Bennett scored a victory goal for women's rights in football. She took the Football Association to court under the Sex Discrimination Act after their ban on mixed matches for the under twelves and won her case plus £250 compensation.

Right on Theresa.

MARIAN KEOGH & JOANNA HAYNES.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL SOCIALIST BOOK FAIR.

EPWORTH HALL, NICHOLSON SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

SATURDAY 26TH AUGUST 12NOON - 8P.M.

Publishers and distributors include PDC, Virago, Pluto Press, Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, Lawrence and Wishart, Bookmarx.

Feminist, socialist and radical books and publications on display and for sale.

IMPROVED ABORTION FACILITIES IN EDINBURGH

A comparative study, comparing four methods of early abortion has been set up at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. The only drawback is that at present the scheme is a trial only. Its aim is to compare four methods of early abortion to determine which are the most useful and acceptable - to the woman, that is.

At the moment the woman is being given a choice of the following:

Menstrual extraction: This is the emptying of the contents of the uterus using a fine tube or cannula, attached to a syringe, with the use of either a local or a general anaesthetic. This procedure will be carried out on a day care basis, the woman being permitted to return home the same day, providing she gets a taxi, is driven or accompanied home by a friend.

Menstrual regulation: This is the insertion of a pessary impregnated with one of two prostaglandins into the vagina. Prostaglandins are a group of substances, produced naturally in the human body, whose synthetic (i.e. made in laboratories) derivatives produce contractions of the uterine muscles. This leads to the expulsion of the contents of the uterus.

The use of this method of early abortion necessitates an overnight stay in hospital, as the side effects of prostaglandins are unknown, as is also the amount of bleeding they may produce.

At the present time this trial is only open to women who are referred via the Family Planning Association, the Brook Clinic, and the Student Health Centre, who are less than seven weeks from the first day of their last menstrual period. Although the scheme is only at present a trial, if it proves to be successful there is no reason why it should not be continued on a permanent basis.

Daycare abortion facilities are available at the Eastern General Hospital with referral via the woman's own or a sympathetic G.P. These are being performed on women up to twelve weeks from their last menstrual period, usually under a general anaesthetic. Using vacuum aspiration they can be performed under a local anaesthetic. Whichever form of anaesthetic is used, the woman is allowed home the same day, providing she goes home in a taxi or is accompanied.

ANNE SCOTT

ABORTION

JOAN PATON

GARSCADDEN BY-ELECTION

After ten years of fighting around successive bills in parliament abortion has now become a central feature of political life. The Garscadden byelection is a case in point. An attempt was made to divide the electorate and the candidates over abortion rights. SPUC asked their supporters to vote only for those candidates who were anti-abortion, which wasn't difficult given the views of the majority of the candidates. The first to turn his coat was Keith Dovey of the SNP. Fearful of losing the Catholic vote he adopted an anti-abortion stance. Dewar (Labour), despite his party's conference decision supporting abortion on request, exercised the 'conscience clause' and came out against. The only candidate to support a woman's right to choose was the Socialist Workers' Party candidate, Peter Porteous. The most significant aspect of the byelection was the well organised strong presence of SPUC. Throughout the campaign NAC petitioned in the shopping centre. They organised a public meeting which all candidates except the SNP and Tory attended. NAC faced many difficulties this being their first intervention in an election, but they learned many lessons for the future.

'Save my baby' cried the newspapers as Mr. Paton tried to prevent his wife from having an abortion. Meanwhile Ms. Paton was trying to get a divorce. The attack on Joan Paton's right to choose was led by hysterical SPUC supporters and the press. The 'objectivity' of the press was clearly illustrated by its consistent support for Mr. Paton's case. Ms. Paton was not interviewed. SPUC financed Mr. Paton's court actions in an attempt to delay the abortion until it was too late. Had Mr. Paton won this case it would have been a disastrous precedent for the campaign for abortion rights. Ms. Paton received support outside the court house from those who believe in a woman's right to choose.



PROPOSED ANTI ABORTION CLINICS

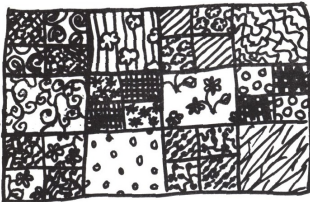
Any woman who has ever sought advice about an unwanted or unplanned pregnancy in Scotland would be astonished to hear the views of Councillor Innes of Glasgow District Council. He believes that if women were given the 'right kind of advice' (sic) many of them would not seek abortions. To this end he proposes the setting up of anti-abortion clinics and wants the council to oppose the principle of abortion on demand. No final decision has yet been made.

MARIAN KEOGH & JOANNA HAYNES

by Chris Aldred

I have always loved patchwork quilts. My mother has one handed down through the family, and I remember as a little girl pestering her to get out the quilt and talk to me about it and how it was made. More recently as a feminist, I have become interested in the traditional female crafts as an answer to the accusation 'but if women really had the same degree of creativity as men, there would be more women artists.' There obviously are women artists - though their work is often dismissed as merely craft. Without entering into a debate about the relative values of 'art' and 'craft' it seems to me that the patchwork quilts recently on display at Aberdeen Art Gallery have many of the best qualities of both. The quilts are original, have stunning visual impact - I watched people coming into the gallery and gasping with amazement as they caught sight of the first quilts - but they also display the application of a genuine skill with the needle and many hours of hard work using a variety of traditional and individual techniques.

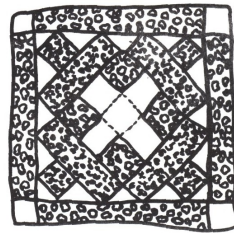
FOUR
PATCH
An early
design
based on
two sizes
of square
patch.



I don't know exactly what I expected from an exhibition of patchwork quilts, but I was surprised. Somehow I expected finicky designs in pastel prints, small shapes, and simple regular designs. Perhaps I might have been right about a particular tradition of English quilts - though our own family quilt is not as dull as my expectations. I was certainly unprepared for the bold use of colour and shape of most American quilts, or the starkly beautiful deep colours and austere shapes used in American quilts from areas where religion forbade frivolity. There were Welsh wool quilts, more remarkable for their quilting than for their patchwork, but no quilts of Scottish origin. Where are the Scottish quilt-makers? Or were the Scottish women too busy knitting and weaving?

American folk songs sung by women about women's lives accompanied the exhibition - another outlet for women's artistic abilities? One of the main reasons for the development of the American tradition of quilt making was the scarcity and expense of cloth in the last century. Settlers were prevented from developing their own textile industry by British textile manufacturers, unwilling to lose a valuable market in America. Prices of raw materials were kept deliberately high, trade secrets were not shared with

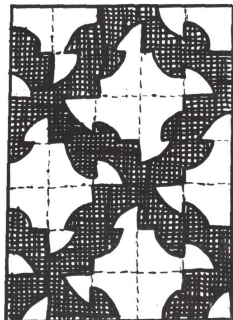
the American manufacturers, and whenever the American industry looked as if it might be going to stand a chance, the British flooded the market with cheap Indian textiles. These nasty tricks of free enterprise had the inevitable result on the consumer.



COURT
HOUSE
SQUARE

patchwork

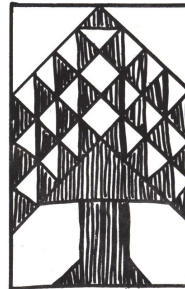
Cloth was desperately needed, and expensive. Nothing could be wasted, so offcuts from family dressmaking and the good bits of worn clothing were stitched together to make pieces of serviceable size. Early quilts show this necessity clearly, and little artistry was used at first to turn the variety of shapes, colours and patterns to good effect. Soon, however, quilts became more deliberately decorative, and various combinations of patches were named - 'Rob Peter to pay Paul' or 'Drunkard's path' is a pattern in which part of a square patch is swapped for the same part of another square (see illustration); 'Court House Square' is a particular arrangement of square patches, 'Four Patch' is a chequerboard arrangement of two sizes of squares; 'Tumbling Blocks' is an arrangement of diamond shaped patches which uses colour or texture to give a 3-D effect of a pile of cubes (the same configuration of patches using different colour and texture patterns gives the pattern named 'Stars'). The names alone are interesting.



DRUNKARD'S
PATH (or 'Rob
Peter to pay
Paul')

was the maker
intending a
pun when she
worked this
quilt in blue
& white - the
Temperance
colours?

Other quilts are deliberately representational, or use well-known shapes to build up a pattern. Triangular patches are used to form baskets or pine trees or sawtooth designs. Hexagons are used to suggest flowers 'Grandmother's Flower Garden' or Log Cabin patchwork, which uses strips of fabric suggests furrows when dark and light shades of greeny-brown are used systematically.



MASSACHUSETTS
PINE TREE

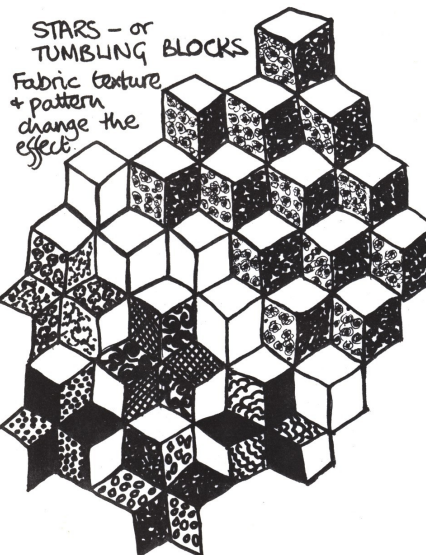
Patchwork
design in
two colours

TULIPS
IN A
VASE

red
patchwork
on white



Patches vary in size from tiny diamonds barely an inch long to large squares three feet across. Some quilts used cottons and printed cottons, and for some the maker had dyed fabric herself. Some used quite heavy wool fabrics - another surprise for me. I suppose I hadn't really thought about the functional qualities of the quilts and the need for warmth. In fact I had never understood the name 'quilt' as none of the quilts I had ever seen had in fact been quilted - merely a single layer of cloth. The American quilts



STARS - or
TUMBLING BLOCKS
Fabric texture
& pattern
change the
effect

in the exhibition were all quilted - some women obviously took more delight in the quilting than in the patchwork, others liked the patching better.

Quilting designs were hand stitched, and I particularly liked the effect of quilting on woollen fabrics. Leaves, stars, and complex geometric patterns reminiscent of Islamic art were all used for quilting stitches. Some quilt makers had tried to use quilting to complement the effect already created by the patches, but in other quilts it was almost as if the patchwork and the quilting had been done with no reference to each other.

Quilting provided an ideal opportunity for women to work together, and talk to each other. Some of the quilts were made during barn raising - when people from a whole community got together to build a new barn, the women would often work together on quilts. Every bride would expect to have thirteen quilts when she married - twelve plainer ones for everyday use, and a thirteenth quilt, highly decorated. Sometimes women from a whole area would arrive at the house of a woman about to announce her engagement to help her finish the thirteenth quilt, and the exhibition included some photographs of these kinds of events.

For me the quilts are real art - art that stems from people's own experience, and has some use in the real world (though I don't want to deny the value of art whose major use is giving pleasure or helping people to understand their own experience). They are not Art to be auctioned at Sotheby's - though I fear someday they will be. They are art to be used or treasured in the community, and are often the product of collective effort. For me the impact of the exhibition is summed up by the words of a quilt maker, displayed along with the quilts:-

'It took me more than twenty years, nearly twenty five I reckon, in the evening after the children were all put to bed. My whole life is in that quilt. It scares me sometimes when I look at it. All my joys and sorrows are stitched into those little pieces. When I was proud of the boys and when I was downright provoked and angry with them. When the girls annoyed me or when they gave me a warm feeling around my heart. And John too. He was stitched into that quilt and all the thirty years we were married. Sometimes I loved him and sometimes I sat there hating him as I pieced the patches together. So they are all in that quilt, my hopes, my fears, my joys and sorrows, my loves and hates. I tremble sometimes when I remember what that quilt knows about me.'



Leaf & spiral motif for quilting
- black thread on red wool